



1                   26.   (Unchanged) A method for suturing a puncture of a blood vessel through  
2 a tissue tract of a patient body, the vessel having a vessel wall, the method comprising:  
3                   inserting a distal end of the probe through the puncture and into the blood  
4 vessel;  
5                   advancing a first end of the suture from the probe within the tissue tract,  
6 through the vessel wall, and into the vessel;  
7                   withdrawing the first end of the suture from the vessel, through the vessel wall  
8 and through a bight of the suture to form a loop of suture across the puncture; and  
9                   tensioning the first end of the suture and a second end of the suture adjacent the  
10 bight to form a knot affixing the loop of suture across the puncture

1                   27.   (Unchanged) The method of claim 26, further comprising releasably  
2 attaching the bight of suture to a probe before the inserting step, wherein the tensioning step  
3 detaches the bight from the probe

28-39.           PREVIOUSLY CANCELED.

40.              CANCELED.

41.              PREVIOUSLY CANCELED.

42-43.           CANCELED.

44-47.           PREVIOUSLY CANCELED.

Please add the new claims 48-84 as follows .

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1                   -- 48. (New) A method of closing an aperture in a wall of a vessel, the method  
2 comprising:  
3                   causing a device to place at least one suture element through a vessel wall  
4 adjacent an aperture in the vessel wall, such that opposed portions of the suture element extend  
5 from the vessel wall;  
6                   causing the device to form a loose knot formation between the opposed portions  
7 of the at least one suture element after the suture element has been placed; and

8 tightening the loose knot formation thereby at least partially to close the  
9 aperture in the vessel wall.

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1 49. (New) The method of claim 48, wherein causing the device to place the  
2 at least one suture element through the vessel wall adjacent the aperture in the vessel wall  
3 comprises causing the device to place the at least one suture element such that the suture  
4 element extends through the vessel wall on one side of the aperture, across the aperture, and  
5 through the vessel wall on an opposed side of the aperture.

1 50. (New) The method of claim 48, wherein one of the opposed portions of  
2 the suture element defines a loop formation, causing the device to form a loose knot formation  
3 between the opposed portions of the suture element comprising causing the device to pass the  
4 other of the opposed portions of the suture element through the loop formation.

1 51. (New) The method of claim 50, wherein the loop formation is held on  
2 the device releasably, causing the device to pass the other of the opposed portions through the  
3 loop formation comprising causing the device to pass the other of the opposed portions through  
4 the loop formation while the loop formation is held on the device.

1 52. (New) The method of claim 51, wherein tightening the loose knot  
2 formation comprises pulling the opposed portions of the suture element away from each other  
3 after the other of the opposed portions has been passed through the loop formation.

1 53. (New) The method of claim 52, which comprises causing the loose knot  
2 formation to travel toward the aperture in the vessel wall and the loose knot formation to  
3 tighten when at the aperture in response to pulling the opposed portions away from each other.

1 54. (New) The method of claim 52, which comprises causing the loop  
2 formation to be released from the device in response to pulling the opposed portions away  
3 from each other.

1 55. (New) The method of claim 48, wherein causing the device to place at  
2 least one suture element through the vessel wall adjacent the aperture in the vessel wall  
3 comprises causing the device to place at least two suture elements through the vessel wall

4 adjacent the aperture such that opposed portions of each suture element extends from the vessel  
5 wall.

1 56. (New) The method of claim 55, wherein causing the device to place at  
2 least two suture elements through the vessel wall comprises causing the device to place each  
3 suture element through the vessel wall such that each suture element extends through the vessel  
4 wall on one side of the aperture, across the aperture, and through the vessel wall on an opposed  
5 side of the aperture.

1 57. (New) The method of claim 56, wherein causing the device to form a  
2 loose knot formation between the opposed portions of the at least one suture element comprises  
3 causing the device to form a loose knot formation between the opposed portions of each suture  
4 element.

1 58. (New) The method of claim 57, wherein one of the opposed portions of  
2 each suture element defines a loop formation, causing the device to form a loose knot  
3 formation between the opposed portions of each suture element comprising causing the device  
4 to pass the other of the opposed portions of each suture element through the loop formations.

1 59. (New) The method of claim 58, wherein the loop formations are held on  
2 the device releasably, causing the device to pass the other of the opposed portions of each  
3 suture element through the loop formations comprising causing the device to pass the other of  
4 the opposed portions through the loop formations while the loop formations are held on the  
5 device.

1 60. (New) The method of claim 59, which comprises tightening each loose  
2 knot formation thereby to close the aperture in the vessel wall.

1 61. (New) The method of claim 60, wherein tightening the loose knot  
2 formations comprises pulling the opposed portions of each suture element away from each  
3 other after the other of the opposed portions have been passed through the loop formations.

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1           62.   (New) The method of claim 61, which comprises causing the loose knot  
2   formations to travel toward the aperture and the loose knot formations to tighten when at the  
3   aperture in response to pulling the opposed portions away from one another.

1           63.   (New) The method of claim 61, which comprises causing the loop  
2   formations to be released from the device in response to pulling the opposed portions away from  
3   each other.

1           64.   (New) The method as claimed in claim 48 or claim 55, wherein causing  
2   the device to place the or each suture element through the vessel wall comprises causing the  
3   device to pass an end of the or each suture element through the vessel wall on one side of the  
4   aperture from a position outside the vessel, causing the device to pass the or each end across the  
5   aperture inside the vessel, and causing the device to pass the or each end through the vessel wall  
6   at the opposed side of the aperture such that the or each suture element extends through the  
7   vessel wall on the one side of the aperture, across the aperture, and through the vessel wall on the  
8   opposed side of the aperture.

1           65.   (New) The method of claim 64, wherein causing the device to place the or  
2   each suture element through the vessel wall comprises passing an end portion of the device  
3   through the aperture in the vessel wall.  
4

1           66.   (New) The method of claim 65, wherein causing the device to place the or  
2   each suture element through the vessel wall comprises deploying an elongate foot of the device  
3   within the vessel, after the end portion of the device has been passed through the aperture, so that  
4   the foot extends across the aperture.

1           67.   (New) The method of claim 66, wherein the device comprises at least one  
2   connection element releasably held on the foot, the or each connection element being arranged to  
3   extend across the aperture when the foot is deployed, causing the device to place the or each  
4   suture element through the vessel wall comprising causing the device to engage the end of the or  
5   each suture element with an end of the or each connection element after the end of the or each  
6   suture element has been passed through the vessel wall on the one side of the aperture.

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1           68.     (New) The method of claim 67, wherein causing the device to place the or  
2 each suture element through the vessel wall further comprises causing the device to pull an  
3 opposed end of the or each connection element through the vessel wall on the opposed side of  
4 the aperture after the end of the or each suture element has been engaged with the end of the or  
5 each connection element, thereby to cause the device to pass the end of the or each suture  
6 element through the vessel wall at the opposed side of the aperture.

1           69.     (New) A device for closing an aperture in a wall of a vessel, the device  
2 comprising:  
3                 a body;  
4                 at least one suture element held on the body; and  
5                 means for passing the suture element through the vessel wall adjacent an aperture  
6 in the vessel wall, such that opposed portions of the suture element extend from the vessel wall  
7 and the suture element is positioned to form a loose knot formation between opposed portions  
8 thereof after the suture element has been passed through the vessel wall.

1           70.     (New) The device of claim 69, wherein the means for passing the suture  
2 element through the vessel wall adjacent the aperture is arranged to pass the suture element  
3 through the vessel wall such that the suture element extends through the vessel wall on one side  
4 of the aperture, across the aperture, and through the vessel wall on an opposed side of the  
5 aperture.

1           71.     (New) The device of claim 70, which comprises at least two suture  
2 elements held on the body and means for passing each suture element through the vessel wall  
3 such that each suture element extends through the vessel wall on one side of the aperture, across  
4 the aperture, and through the vessel wall on an opposed side of the aperture and each suture  
5 element is positioned to form a loose knot formation between opposed portions thereof after the  
6 suture elements have been passed through the vessel wall.

1           72.     (New) A device for closing an aperture in a vessel wall, the device  
2 comprising:  
3                 a body;

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4 at least one suture element held on the body; and  
5 at least one needle on the body, the needle being operatively associated with the  
6 suture element and arranged to pass the suture element through the vessel wall such that  
7 opposed portions of the suture element extend from the vessel wall and the suture element is  
8 positioned to form a loose knot formation between opposed portions thereof after the suture  
9 element has been passed through the vessel wall.

1 73. (New) The device of claim 72, wherein the at least one needle is  
2 arranged to pass the suture element through the vessel wall such that the suture element  
3 extends through the vessel wall on one side of the aperture, across the aperture, and through the  
4 vessel wall on an opposed side of the aperture and the suture element is held on the body in a  
5 position to form a loose knot formation between opposed portions of the suture element after  
6 the suture element has been passed through the vessel wall.

1 74. (New) The device of claim 73, wherein a portion of the suture element is  
2 held on the body to define a loop formation, the needle being arranged to pass an opposed  
3 portion of the suture element through the loop formation after the suture element has been  
4 passed through the vessel wall, thereby to position the suture element to form a loose knot  
5 formation between the opposed portions thereof.

1 75. (New) The device of claim 74, which comprises at least two needles  
2 operatively associated with the suture element, the one needle being arranged to pass the suture  
3 element through the vessel wall on one side of the aperture and the other needle being arranged  
4 to pass the suture element through the vessel wall on the opposed side of the aperture.

1 76. (New) The device of claim 75, wherein the one needle is arranged to  
2 pass the suture element through the vessel wall on the one side of the aperture from a position  
3 outside the vessel and the other needle is arranged to pass the suture element through the vessel  
4 wall on the opposed side of the aperture from a position inside the vessel.

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1           77.   (New) The device of claim 76, wherein the other needle is arranged to  
2 pass through the vessel wall on the opposed side of the aperture and then to draw the suture  
3 element from inside the vessel through the vessel wall and through the loop formation.

1           78.   (New) The device of claim 77, which further comprises at least one  
2 connection element on the body, the connection element being arranged to extend across the  
3 aperture.

1           79.   (New) The device of claim 78, wherein the connection element is in the  
2 form of a relatively short length of suture.

1           80.   (New) The device of claim 78, wherein the connection element is arranged  
2 to cooperate with the first and second needles such that when the one needle passes the suture  
3 element through the vessel wall on the one side of the aperture, an end of the suture element  
4 engages with an end of the connection element, and when the other needle passes through the  
5 vessel wall on the opposed side of the aperture, the other needle engages an opposed end of the  
6 connection element.

1           81.   (New) The device of claim 80, wherein the suture element is releasably  
2 engaged on the one needle so that when the one needle has passed the suture element through the  
3 vessel wall on the one side of the aperture and the end of the suture element has engaged with the  
4 end of the connection element and the other needle has been passed through the vessel wall on  
5 the opposed side of the aperture and has engaged the opposed end of the connection element, the  
6 suture element can be passed through the vessel wall in response to the other needle drawing the  
7 connection element through the vessel wall on the opposed side of the aperture.

1           82.   (New) The device of claim 81, wherein the body comprises a shaft portion  
2 arranged to be passed through the aperture in the vessel wall.

1           83.   (New) The device of claim 82, which comprises an elongate foot  
2 formation on the shaft portion, the foot formation being selectively displaceable between a low

3 profile condition, in which the foot is generally aligned with the shaft, and a deployed  
4 condition, in which the foot extends generally laterally relative to the shaft.

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1 84. (New) The device of claim 83, wherein the connection element is  
2 mounted on the foot formation such that the connection element extends across the aperture  
3 when the shaft portion has been passed through the aperture and the foot formation has been  
4 displaced into its deployed condition.--

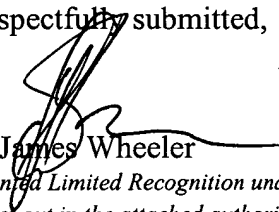
CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this Application are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 650-326-2400.



Respectfully submitted,

  
C. James Wheeler

Granted Limited Recognition under 37 CFR §10.9(b)  
as set out in the attached authorization

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